

ROCK GARDEN

LEARN FROM
HOME



In Japan, gardening is seen as an art form used to balance and highlight the natural landscape. There are two major types of Japanese gardens: water gardens and rock gardens. Water gardens typically feature a waterfall or pond surrounded by flowers, grasses, and trees to create a lush and organic environment. Rock gardens involve—you guessed it—rocks!

Long associated with Buddhist traditions, rock gardens provide a calming space often used to practice meditation. One of the most impressive features of rock gardens is their carefully raked and arranged patterns of sand or gravel.

These wavy and undulating patterns mimic the movements of water. Surrounding, and sometimes inside, these raked patterns are larger rocks arranged in odd-number groupings. All these larger rocks also represent natural forms like islands, mountains, waterfalls, or trees.

DESIGN TECHNIQUES

Today, Japanese garden designers use some of the following techniques in their rock garden design:

- Rocks are the backbone of rock garden composition
- Triangular rocks and rock groupings are best, as the form of a triangle can represent the earth, man, and the divine
- Odd-numbered groupings of rocks or objects are preferred
- The total number of groupings should also be odd
- The largest rock in each cluster is placed first, then smaller rocks can be placed in relation to that rock
- Asymmetry in the design should be carefully considered and incorporated

STANDARDS:

VA.4.H.1.3

VA.68.S.2.1

ACTIVITY

ROCK GARDEN

MATERIALS:
SAND/ROCKS/PEBBLES, FORK, CONTAINER
(SHALLOW BOX, PLATE, OR DISH), CENTERPIECE
(SMALL FAKE TREE, DINOSAUR TOY)

DIFFICULTY LEVEL:
MODERATE

BUILD A TABLETOP ROCK GARDEN



The act of raking and creating designs in the gravel of a rock garden can help people relax and focus on the moment, which is one of the reasons these gardens are used to practice meditation. Some people like to keep small, tabletop rock gardens to help with this mindfulness. Here is one way to create your own rock garden at home!

DIRECTIONS

1. Decorate the outside of your container as desired
2. Fill your container with sand
3. Place centerpiece items, such as a bonsai tree, succulent, palm-sized rocks, small toys, etc., inside the container. Remember to try to arrange these objects into groupings of odd numbers and to have an odd number of total groupings.
4. Use a fork to rake circular patterns in the sand
5. Revisit your rock garden to relax and create new patterns. Try switching out the centerpiece objects or raking new designs in the sand. You can also replace the sand with ground coffee or rice for a different sensory experience.



WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE WHAT YOU CREATE!

Click [here](#) to share your masterpiece on our Family Programs Facebook Group!